

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST CONTINUATION SHEET  
U.S. 301 SOUTH CORRIDOR TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Property Name: Old Brick Jail  
Survey No.: CH-178 (PACS C115)

Property Address 200 Charles Street, La Plata, Charles County  
Owner Name/Address County of Charles, P.O. Box B, La Plata, MD 20646  
Year Built 1896

**Description:**

The Old Brick Jail was previously surveyed by the Maryland Historical Trust; the date of the survey is unknown. Since the time of the previous survey, the property has received a new standing seam metal roof. There have been no other changes to the property.

**National Register Evaluation:**

The Old Brick Jail, constructed in 1896, was previously surveyed by the Maryland Historical Trust. The Old Brick Jail is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, as an example of a late nineteenth century municipal building, used as a jail, and as an office and residence for the jailer. The jail was built as an associated building for the courthouse and it has not been significantly altered. The west addition has not had a significant impact on the form and massing of the original design. The jail is one of the few extant examples of early buildings in downtown La Plata. The property is not eligible under Criterion A, as research conducted indicates no association with any historic events or trends significant in the development of national, state or local history. Historic research indicates that the property has no association with persons who have made specific contributions to history, and therefore, it does not meet Criterion B. Finally, the structure has no known potential to yield important information, and therefore, is not eligible under Criterion D.

**Verbal Boundary Description and Justification:**

The National Register boundaries of the Old Brick Jail follow the current property lines of 200 Charles Street (Charles County Tax Maps 112 and 113, Parcel 94). This 0.4 hectare (1 acre) parcel is bounded on the north by Baltimore Street, on the east by Washington Avenue, on the south by Charles Street, and on the west by Church Street. The boundary includes the jail and the courthouse and courthouse west wing, which do not contribute to the significance of the property. The parcel is the lot associated with the first courthouse and jail in La Plata.

**MHT CONCURRENCE:**

Eligibility ☒ recommended ☐ not recommended  
Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D Considerations ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☐ None  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Suzanne Pickens 07/21/1997  
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services Date

[Signature] 4/4/01  
Reviewer, NR program Date

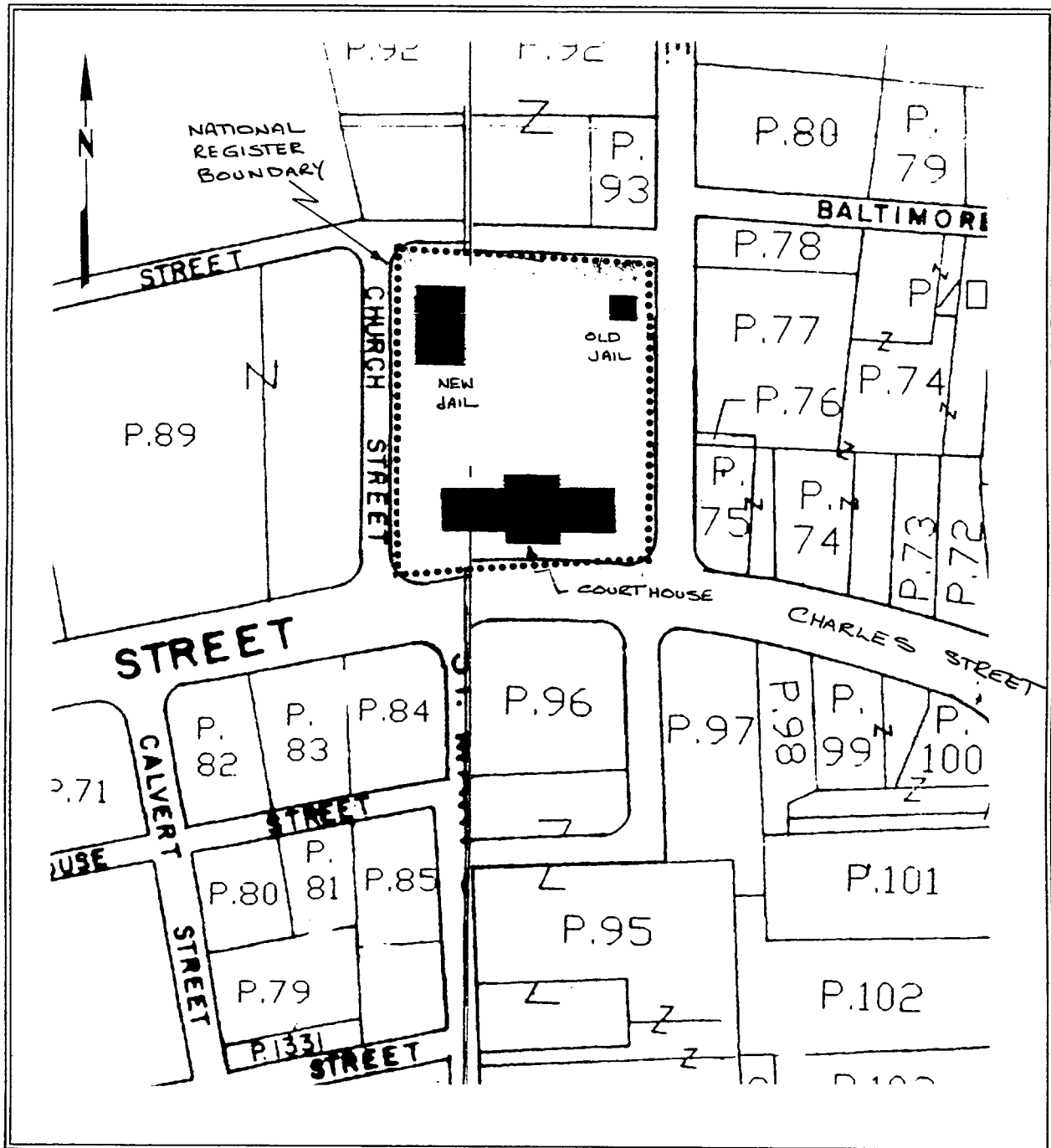
Preparer:  
**P.A.C. Spero & Company**  
September 1996

[Signature]

Property Address 200 Charles Street, La Plata, Charles County  
Owner Name/Address County of Charles, P.O. Box B, La Plata, MD 20646

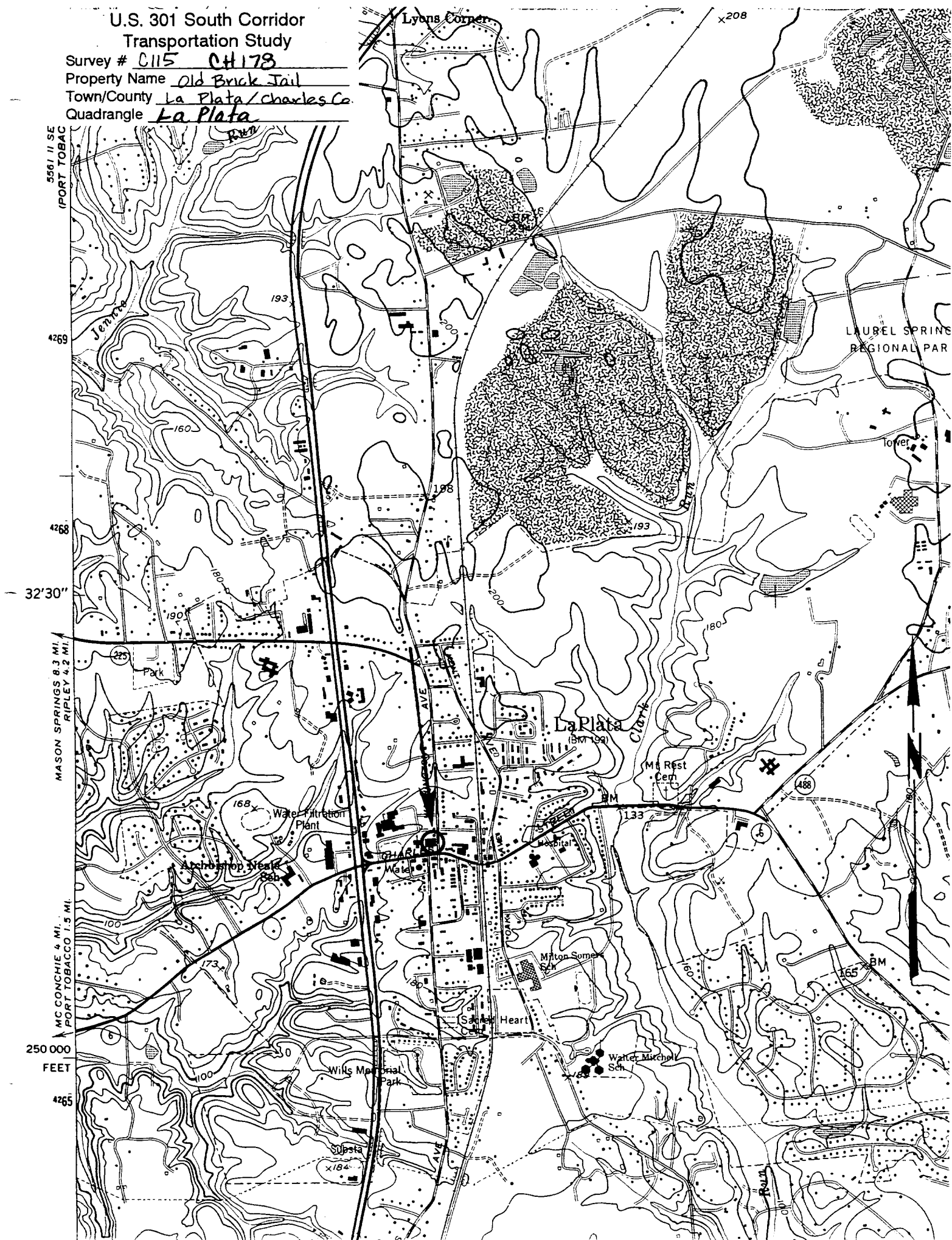
Year Built 1896

Resource Sketch Map and National Register Boundary Map:



Survey # C115 CH178  
Property Name Old Brick Jail  
Town/County La Plata / Charles Co.  
Quadrangle La Plata

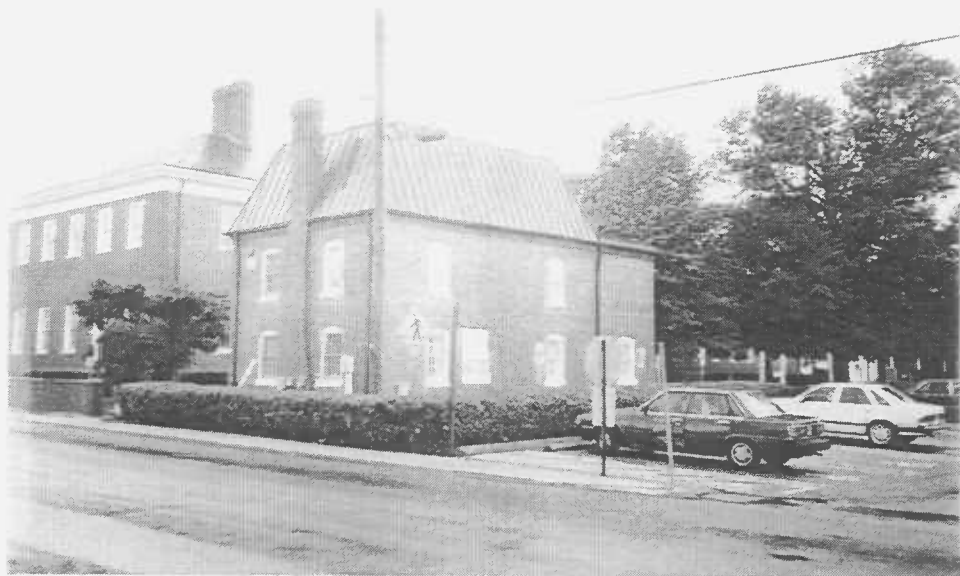
Quadrangle La Plata



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Old Jail; La Plata Jail (preferred)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Washington Avenue

CITY, TOWN

La Plata

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maryland

CODE

024

COUNTY

Charles

CODE

017

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT  
☒ BUILDING(S)  
☐ STRUCTURE  
☐ SITE  
☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC  
☐ PRIVATE  
☐ BOTH  
**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**  
☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED  
☐ UNOCCUPIED  
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS  
**ACCESSIBLE**  
☒ YES: RESTRICTED  
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM  
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK  
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS  
☒ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

County Commissioners of Charles County, Maryland

STREET &amp; NUMBER

P.O. Box B

CITY, TOWN

La Plata

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland 20646

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Charles County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Charles Street

CITY, TOWN

La Plata

STATE

Maryland 20646

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

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CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old Jail is located on the west side of Washington Avenue, on the northeast corner of the Charles County Courthouse grounds, approximately one hundred yards north of the intersection of Charles Street and Washington Avenue in La Plata, Maryland.

Built circa 1896 as a companion to the Victorian-style county courthouse constructed in the same year but later rebuilt in the Colonial style, the Jail is of common bond brick construction, two stories in height beneath a mansard roof.

The building faces south and is three bays wide on both stories with the main entrance in the center first floor bay. On the rear or north side there are four windows, two on each story. Originally, a chimney separated the two windows on each floor. Although the chimney was removed at a later date, its outline is easily discernable in the brickwork of this elevation. On the east end are four windows flanking a slightly projecting narrow chimney that rises to a heavily corbeled cap. This same arrangement was repeated on the west end where all original first floor features are concealed by a one-story, one-bay, flat-roofed brick addition built against this elevation circa 1954. An outside, wood framed stair rises along the west end of the addition, providing access to the second floor of the earlier building. Entrance to the second floor is gained through a former window opening enlarged to accommodate a door. On all elevations of the earlier structure, the openings are headed by segmental arches composed of double courses of header brick. The windows, once covered by iron grilles, have six-over-six sash and cut stone sills.

The roof of the jail is framed with metal girders that once supported slate shingles. The earlier roof covering was removed several decades ago and the roof re-sheathed with tin. The eave cornice, extending around all four sides of the building, is of wood.

While the exterior plan of the Old Jail is of interest for its simplicity and the symmetrical arrangement of its components, the more intriguing features of its design are found on the interior.

Built as a jail, where the secure holding of prisoners was the most important consideration, it was constructed with concrete floors and brick partition walls. The first floor is divided into four small rooms with plastered walls. The ceiling is unquestionably the most interesting feature of this floor. Metal tie beams, spaced about six feet apart and extending from front to back, support the concrete floor between the two levels. The spaces between the tie beams are arched and plastered, creating a series of vaults in each room. Included among the changes which have occurred at this level are the removal of the window grilles, the introduction of pipes for hot

See continuation sheet #1

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Form No. 10-300a  
(Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Old Jail  
Charles County,  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

DESCRIPTION CONTINUED

water heating, the removal of the original stair which rose along the west wall of the southwest room, and the introduction of a small bathroom in the southeast room. The three principal rooms are now used as offices, as is the single room contained in the circa 1954 west addition.

On the second floor level, now only accessible via an outside stair and used for storage, is one large room. It formerly contained a number of small iron grided cells, the fasteners for which are still in evidence. As mentioned above, the floor is of solid concrete. The roof girders are seated on top of the plastered brick walls which rise to a height just above the windows. Above the brick walls the wall area tapers inward, following the rise of the girders to a ceiling that is level with the crown of the roof. Like the first floor ceiling, the girders are plastered with the wall surface curving inward between each, providing a rather unusual undulating effect. The manner in which the bases of the girders are secured to the top of the walls is as yet unknown. However, iron rods running from front to back and linked to the inside faces of two pairs of girders just above the top of the walls undoubtedly serve to reinforce the girders, securing them in place.



# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Circa 1896

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Jail, built when the location of the county seat was transferred from Port Tobacco to La Plata at the end of the nineteenth century, is the last county building remaining to commemorate that event. It thus becomes Charles County's most historic surviving public building.

The present town of La Plata, founded on lands owned by the then prominent Chapman family and called "Le Plateau," traces its birth to the arrival of the railroad in Charles County in 1872.

Among the many scheduled stops between Washington, D.C. and the Popes Creek terminus of this particular route was La Plata Station, located three and one-half miles north of the then county seat of Port Tobacco. By 1873 the Pennsylvania Railroad had constructed here a combined warehouse and passenger station, spawning the establishment of several stores and private residences.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Charles County had suffered numerous economic setbacks, one of the most far reaching being the Civil War and the end of slavery.

Once the hub of county life, the county seat of Port Tobacco, beset by financial difficulty and ever increasing social decay, became less and less desirable as a county seat. This situation was reinforced when the railroad succeeded river transportation as a cheaper and easier means of transporting commercial goods.

By the last decades of the nineteenth century, change was in the air and the suggested move of the county seat to a more convenient and economically viable location became a hotly contested issue. La Plata, by the 1880's a bustling, quickly growing community, was favored by many to assume this position. In 1892 the courthouse at Port Tobacco mysteriously burned and in 1895 the countians voted to relocate the county's seat of government to La Plata.

Construction of the new courthouse, a large Victorian structure designed by Joseph C. Johnson and built by James Haislip, began in 1896. It is probable, though not definitely known, that the jail was built at or about this same time.

See Continuation Sheet #2

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Old Jail  
Charles County,

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 8

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE CONTINUED

Despite its solid brick walls, concrete floors and steel framed roof, the jail was condemned by the County Commissioners in 1916. A new jail, still existing, was built and the old one was ordered to be sold to the highest bidder with the provision that the purchaser tear it down. There were, however, no bidders and the jail stood empty and unused for several years.




In 1922 the Federation of Rural Women's Clubs in Charles County initiated a movement for the establishment of a public library. In 1923 the County Commissioners appropriated \$1,621.00 to make essential improvements and repairs to the Old Jail, among them the introduction of a steam line from the Courthouse furnace to provide heat. From 1923 until 1929 the library was located on the first floor of the building and the office of the County Agent on the second. In 1929, however, due to a lack of public interest, the library closed. In 1945 the library was re-established under a County Library law brought into being largely through the efforts of P. D. Brown, a former County Agent. The library reopened in the Old Jail and remained there until it moved into the newly built south wing of the courthouse in 1954. Shortly afterwards the Jail became the headquarters of the Children's Aid Society of Charles County who maintain office and storage facilities there today.




It is readily evident that the history of the Old Jail is closely intertwined with that of La Plata. Unlike its companion, the 1896 courthouse, now completely rebuilt in the Colonial style, the Old Jail remains largely unaltered. Architecturally, it is truly an intriguing building. Although from the exterior a fairly simple structure, the vaulted ceilings of the first floor and the undulating wall surface covering the steel supports of the roof on the second floor make it an unusual building. In this region, where no buildings of this date or comparable architecture exist, it enjoys the distinction of being completely unique.

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Scrapbooks, Charles County Public Library, La Plata, Maryland.

## UTM REFERENCES

B   

D   

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

**LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES**

CODE

**CODE**

njm

NAME / TITLE

J. Richard Rivoire

## ORGANIZATION

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Architectural Historian

December 1, 1976

STREET &amp; NUMBER

TELEPHONE

317 Charles Street

870-3318

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

## La Plata

Maryland

**THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:**

NATIONAL \_\_\_\_\_

STATE\_\_\_\_\_

**LOCAL \_\_\_\_\_**

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

**TITLE**

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

**ATTEST:**

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER**

MD. HISTORICAL TRUST  
BOX 1704  
ANNAPOLIS, MD. 21404NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME	
COMMON:	OLD BRICK JAIL (CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY-BLDG.)
AND/OR HISTORIC:	

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: REAR (N) OF E WING OF CO. COURTHOUSE			
CITY OR TOWN: LA PLATA			
STATE MD.	CODE	COUNTY: CHAS.	CODE

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Bath <input type="checkbox"/>	Public Acquisition: In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input type="checkbox"/>	CHILDREN'S
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>	AID SOC. OFFICE

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNERS NAME: CHARLES COUNTY (County Commissioners)			
STREET AND NUMBER: Charles County Courthouse			
CITY OR TOWN: La Plata	STATE: Md.	CODE	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Charles County			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: La Plata	STATE: Md	CODE	
APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:			

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY:			
DATE OF SURVEY: Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/>			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

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ENTRY NUMBER  
DATE

## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>	Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	Altered <input type="checkbox"/>	Unaltered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Moved <input type="checkbox"/>	Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

2 storey brick  
 roof sheathed in tin  
 Orig. 3 bays S Elevation - door at center.  
 3 windows second level.  
 all lintels have segmental arch.  
 windows 2/2 panes  
 1 storey 1 bay addition to W. gable  
 & flat roof - exterior stairs from this  
 addition to 2nd floor W. gable of main  
 block.  
 Exterior 2 flue chimney with  
 flush chimney stack at N side. 1 wind.  
 flanking ea. side both levels.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian ☐16th Century ☐18th Century ☐20th Century ☐15th Century ☐17th Century ☐19th Century ☒

## SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal ☐Education ☐Political ☐Urban Planning ☐Prehistoric ☐Engineering ☐

Religion/Phi-

Other (Specify) ☐Historic ☐Industry ☐losophy ☐Agriculture ☐Invention ☐Science ☐Art ☐Landscape ☐Sculpture ☐Commerce ☐Architecture ☐

Sociol/Humon-

Communications ☐Literature ☐itarian ☐Conservation ☐Military ☐Theater ☐Music ☐Transportation ☐

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:	
ORGANIZATION	DATE
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE
	CODE

## 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

## NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

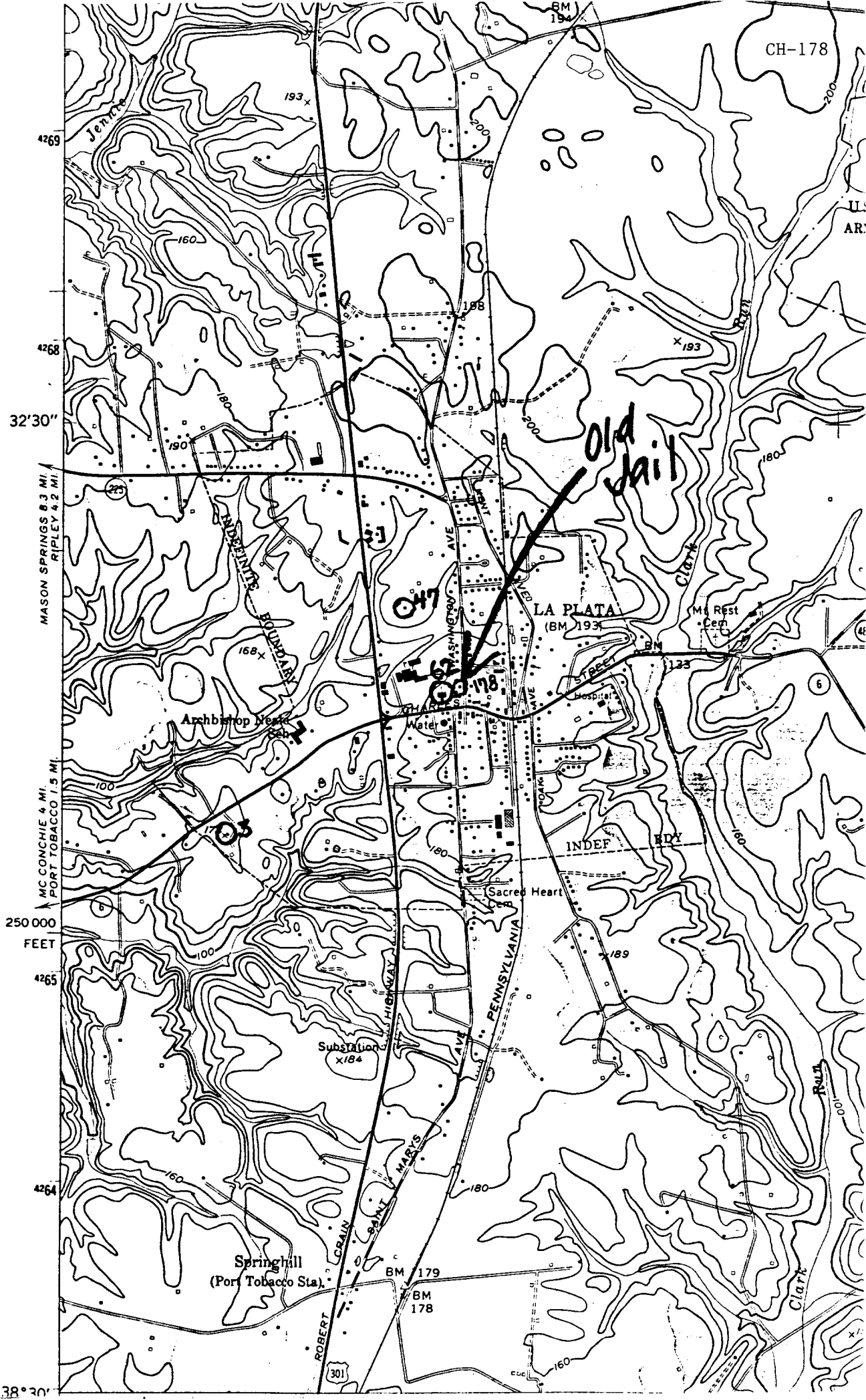
Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

LA Plata  
Quad







La Plata Jail

CHAS-178

J. Richard Rinnie



La Plata Jail CHAS-178

J. Richard Rennie



La Plata Jail

CHAS-178

J. Richard Rivone



R 1A' CH-175 0 92

9.

La Plata Jail

CHAS-178

J. Richard Ruone





La Plata Jail CHAS-179

J Richard Ruvine